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Title: Need to set up a spices procurement and trading company for procurement and trading of spices in the country.

SHRI K. FRANCIS GEORGE : Madam, I had raised a question in the current Session asking whether the Government would consider the setting up of a new Spices Procurement and Trading Company. Why I had raised this issue was due to the steep fall in prices of spices like cardamom, pepper, vanilla etc. in this country. The answer that I got was "no" from the hon. Minister of Commerce. The National Agriculture Commission, headed by Dr. M.S. Swaminathan has made several recommendations. One of the recommendations is that the Government should ensure that the farmer gets a profit or a net income on the agricultural products which he produces. In the case of spices, what was actually happening in Kerala was this. For example, cardamom, when it was fetching only Rs.100-150 there, in the Capital in Delhi and also in other metropolitan cities, per kilogram cardamom used to fetch around Rs.700-800 and even Rs.1000. So, there is a reasonable price available. The price realization is reasonably possible even in this country. The problem is that middlemen are cornering the bulk of the amount that should have gone to the farmers. So, what should be done is that the Government should come out with a procurement and trading company to procure the products from the farmers at a fair price so that the farmers get a net income for their toil. It has to open up retail outlets in all the metropolitan cities and major towns and cities in the country. Through this, we can save the farmers and we can help the spice-growing farmers. So, a special Spices Procurement and Trading Company has to be set up which can be done through the help of the Spices Board which is already operating. So, the Commerce Ministry, Government of India should come out with this.

MADAM CHAIRMAN: You can say it a few words only. Please make your demand.

SHRI K. FRANCIS GEORGE : That is my demand. I request the Government to consider this again so that it will be of great benefit to the farmers especially the spice-growing farmers of this country.[R64]